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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/887,552	06/21/2001	Michael W. Leviten	R-67	5854

26619 7590 10/28/2004

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EXAMINER

WILSON, MICHAEL C

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1632

DATE MAILED: 10/28/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Advisory Action

Application No.

09/887,552

Applicant(s)

LEVITEN ET AL.

Examiner

Michael C. Wilson

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--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 22 September 2004 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE. Therefore, further action by the applicant is required to avoid abandonment of this application. A proper reply to a final rejection under 37 CFR 1.113 may only be either: (1) a timely filed amendment which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a timely filed Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee); or (3) a timely filed Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114.

PERIOD FOR REPLY [check either a) or b)]

- a) ☐ The period for reply expires _____ months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
- b) ☐ The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.
- ONLY CHECK THIS BOX WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

1. ☒ A Notice of Appeal was filed on 22 September 2004. Appellant's Brief must be filed within the period set forth in 37 CFR 1.192(a), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 1.191(d)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal.
2. ☒ The proposed amendment(s) will not be entered because:
- (a) ☒ they raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
- (b) ☐ they raise the issue of new matter (see Note below);
- (c) ☐ they are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
- (d) ☐ they present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: new claim 17 would require considerations under utility/enableness not previously required.

3. ☐ Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
4. ☐ Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
5. ☒ The a) ☐ affidavit, b) ☐ exhibit, or c) ☒ request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: see attached.
6. ☐ The affidavit or exhibit will NOT be considered because it is not directed SOLELY to issues which were newly raised by the Examiner in the final rejection.
7. ☒ For purposes of Appeal, the proposed amendment(s) a) ☒ will not be entered or b) ☐ will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.

The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:

Claim(s) allowed: _____.

Claim(s) objected to: _____.

Claim(s) rejected: 8 and 10.

Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: 1-7, 9 and 11-16.

8. ☐ The drawing correction filed on _____ is a) ☐ approved or b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
9. ☐ Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____.
10. ☐ Other: _____.

Advisory Action

101 Utility

Applicants argue knockout mice had a "well-known utility," i.e. "for further study of these disorders and their association with the cerebrus gene." Applicants cite MPEP 2701 II(A)(3). Applicants' arguments are not persuasive. Applicants leave out the final phrase of MPEP 2701 II(A)(3).

If at any time during the examination, it becomes readily apparent that the claimed invention has a well-established utility, do not impose a rejection based on lack of utility. An invention has a well-established utility if (i) a person of ordinary skill in the art would immediately appreciate why the invention is useful based on the characteristics of the invention (e.g., properties or applications of a product or process), and (ii) the utility is specific, substantial, and credible. (underlining added)

Applicants' have also failed to recognize the Utility Guidelines available to the public.

REVISED INTERIM UTILITY GUIDELINES TRAINING MATERIALS repeated from <http://www.uspto.gov/web/menu/utility.pdf>

"Specific Utility" - A utility that is specific to the subject matter claimed. This contrasts with a general utility that would be applicable to the broad class of the invention. For example, a claim to a polynucleotide whose use is disclosed simply as a "gene probe" or "chromosome marker" would not be considered to be specific in the absence of a disclosure of a specific DNA target. Similarly, a general statement of diagnostic utility, such as diagnosing an unspecified disease, would ordinarily be insufficient absent a disclosure of what condition can be diagnosed.

"Substantial utility" - a utility that defines a "real world" use. Utilities that require or constitute carrying out further research to identify or reasonably confirm a "real world" context of use are not substantial utilities. For example,

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both a therapeutic method of treating a known or newly discovered disease and an assay method for identifying compounds that themselves have a "substantial utility" define a "real world" context of use. An assay that measures the presence of a material, which has a stated correlation to a predisposition to the onset of a particular disease condition, would also define a "real world" context of use in identifying potential candidates for preventive measures or further monitoring. On the other hand, the following are examples of situations that require or constitute carrying out further research to identify or reasonably confirm a "real world" context of use and, therefore, do not define "substantial utilities":

A. Basic research such as studying the properties of the claimed product itself or the mechanisms in which the material is involved.

B. A method of treating an unspecified disease or condition. (Note, this is in contrast to the general rule that treatments of specific diseases or conditions meet the criteria of 35 U.S.C. 101.)

C. A Method of assaying for or identifying a material that itself has no "specific and/or substantial utility".

D. A method of making a material that itself has no specific, substantial, and credible utility.

E. A claim to an intermediate product for use in making a final product that has no specific, substantial, and credible utility.

(Page 5-7 of utility guidelines).

A "well-known utility" is a specific, substantial and credible utility which is well known, immediately apparent, or implied by the specification's disclosure of the properties of the material, alone or taken with the knowledge of one skilled in the art. Neither a "well-established utility" nor a "specific utility" applies to any utility that one can dream up for an invention or a utility that would apply to virtually every member of a general class of materials, such as proteins or DNA.

(Paragraph bridging pg 32-33 of utility guidelines).

It was well known to knock out a gene to determine its function or what will happen when the gene is not expressed. However, scientific "utility" is not the same as "patentable utility" or a "well-established" utility.

The MPEP and utility guidelines clearly set forth that a "well-established utility" must be specific, substantial and credible. At the time of filing, knockout

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mice were used for further research in the art at the time of filing. However, further research does not rise to the level of a "well-established utility" because such a utility is not substantial, specific or credible.

The utility guidelines specifically state that further research is not a "substantial utility":

[T]he following are examples of situations that require or constitute carrying out further research to identify or reasonably confirm a "real world" context of use and, therefore, do not define "substantial utilities":

A. Basic research such as studying the properties of the claimed product itself or the mechanisms in which the material is involved.

In this case, further study of mice would have been required to determine how to use the mouse of applicants' invention (with increased startle response, dwarfism, decrease body size, body weight or spleen weight) as a model of disease. Further study would be required to determine the function of the disrupted gene. The overall phenotype of the applicants' mice does not correlate to any disorder; therefore, further study would be required to determine how to use the mice to study a disorder. Thus, using the mice claimed for further research is not a "substantial utility."

Using the mice to identify the function of the knocked out gene is not a "substantial utility" or "specific utility." Olsen (GABA in the Nervous System, 2000, pg 81-95) taught that "although gene targeting is often useful in delineating the contribution of a given gene product to phenotypic characteristics

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observed, some gene knockouts lead to embryonic or perinatal lethality, and others lead to no apparent phenotype. This can arise from a lack of any role for the gene in question in regard to the trait studies or from compensation by other gene products. Analysis of the compensation can yield valuable clues to the genetic pathway” (pg 82, last 11 lines of col. 1). Thus, knockout mice may not be capable of elucidating the function of the protein and may only provide a clue to a pathway the protein being knocked out is involved in. using mice to obtain a clue to a pathway is not a “substantial utility.” Using a mouse with a phenotype caused by genes compensating for a knocked out gene is not a “specific utility” because the phenotype is not specific to the knocked out gene.

Using the mice to identify agents capable of altering a phenotype would require further research and is not a “substantial utility” or “specific utility.” Bowery (Pharm. Rev., 2002, Vol. 54, pg 247-264) taught, “no unique pharmacological or functional properties have been assigned to either subunit or the variants” of GABA_B. “The emergence of high-affinity antagonists for GABA_B receptors has enabled a synaptic role to be established. However, than antagonists have generally failed to establish the existence of pharmacologically distinct receptor types within the GABA_B receptor class. The advent of GABA_{B1} knockout mice has also failed to provide support for multiple receptor types” (pg 247, col. 2, lines 4-). Thus, knockout mice may be used to identify agents that bind to the knocked out gene (GABA_B in the case of Bowery or the cerebrus in the instant application), but the agent may not treat disease or ameliorate any

symptom of disease. Further research would be required to determine how to use such an agent identified using the mouse, which is not a "substantial utility" (see Utility Guidelines for examples of things that do not have "substantial utility" "C. A Method of assaying for or identifying a material that itself has no "specific and/or substantial utility"). Using the mice to identify agents capable of altering a phenotype is also not a "specific utility" because the agent may be affecting other proteins in the pathway and not the cerebrus itself. Using the mice to identify agents capable of altering a phenotype is also not a "specific utility" because the agent may be found using wild-type mice.

Overall, the mice claimed do not have a "well-established utility" because using the mice for further research (to determine how to use the mouse as a model of non-disclosed disease, to determine the function of the gene or to identify agents capable of altering a phenotype) is not a "specific utility" or "substantial utility."

Applicants argue the mice have been ordered by at least four pharmaceutical companies; therefore, applicants conclude that those of skill would recognize the utility of the mice. Applicants' argument is not persuasive. Sales may be evidence to overcome a 103 obviousness rejection, but there is no case law that establishes that "sales" are evidence of patentable utility. Evidence of sales is not evidence the mice have a "well-established" utility or a "specific utility" or a "credible utility."

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No claim is allowed.

Inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael C. Wilson who can normally be reached at the office on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm at 571-272-0738.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to (571) 272-0547.

Patent applicants with problems or questions regarding electronic images that can be viewed in the Patent Application Information Retrieval system (PAIR) can now contact the USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center (Patent EBC) for assistance. Representatives are available to answer your questions daily from 6 am to midnight (EST). The toll free number is (866) 217-9197. When calling please have your application serial or patent number, the type of document you are having an image problem with, the number of pages and the specific nature of the problem. The Patent Electronic Business Center will notify applicants of the resolution of the problem within 5-7 business days. Applicants can also check PAIR to confirm that the problem has been corrected. The USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center is a complete service center supporting all patent business on the Internet. The USPTO's PAIR system provides Internet-based access to patent application status and history information. It also enables applicants to view the scanned images of their own application file folder(s) as well as general patent information available to the public.

For all other customer support, please call the USPTO Call Center (UCC) at 800-786-9199.

If attempts to reach the examiner are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Amy Nelson, can be reached on 571-272-0804.

The official fax number for this Group is (703) 872-9306.

Michael C. Wilson



MICHAEL WILSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER